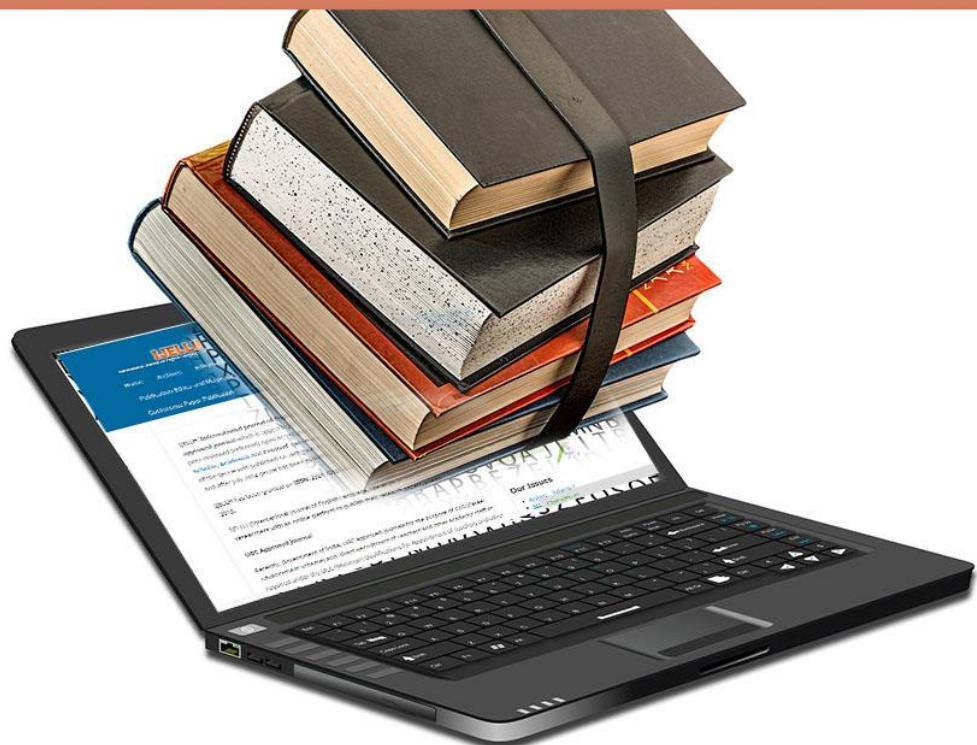


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Aesthetics of Narrative Space

Abstract

While Aristotle's classic definition of plot (*mythos*) as 'a sequence of events' underlines the fact that narrative unfolds in time, it cannot be denied that space too does play an important role in narratives. Events require temporality to unravel and develop, but characters, locales, settings, and parallel narration of events cannot occur without the spatiality of the narrative. The spatial dimension of narrative remained ignored till the twentieth century, when the American literary scholar and critic Joseph Frank published a seminal essay "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" in 1945. In the essay, Frank highlighted the spatiality of narrative and its special significance in the fiction of modernist writers of early twentieth century. The present article builds upon Joseph Frank's ideas to explore the existence and role of spacetime continuum in fiction. The structural and interpretive significance of space is examined, and the *poioumenon* novel, or the novel-within-novel genre of fiction, is discussed for the first time. The important characteristic of the article is the concrete examples from nineteenth and twentieth centuries that are analyzed to illustrate theoretical concepts.

Keywords Space in Fiction, Spacetime Continuum, Joseph Frank, *Poioumenon Novel*,

Mythos

Physics, mathematics and philosophy formulate simultaneity and linearity as the distinctive and essential qualities respectively of pure space and pure time. While space is the boundless expanse that exists all at once, it is time, now accepted as the fourth dimension of space, that makes possible the change from one state of existence to another and the condition of motion. Thus the space-time continuum is fundamental as an existential condition for all matter that by definition occupies space.

Since matter constitutes human bodies too, it follows that humans exist in space and time, and that their experience of living is rooted in space-time continuum. Human life, therefore, --acts, thoughts, speech, aging (the list is not exhaustive)--- also unfolds in these dimensions.

In narratives, space becomes manifested in descriptions and representations of material bodies like nature, humans, things, and animals, for instance. Similarly, there exists only 'manifest time', time perceptible through changes in states of material objects occupying space. This time is sensed through events, which are the building blocks of narrative.

The events are shaped to depict conflicts in life that in classical literature are supposed to mirror universal truths, and in postmodernism the unique and local truths. This shaped sequence of events constitutes a plot. In *Poetics*, Aristotle declares that the plot is the soul of tragedy, the supreme form of narrative, since *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*, the essential elements of conflict, take place in and due to plot. Consequently, the temporal aspect of narratives remains their most important element. However, if narratives depict human life the dimension of space would necessarily be a part of any realistic depiction of humans as any sequence of events, or even a statement like "Once upon a time there lived...," evokes and implies a real world existing in space—the physical space.

In Narratology, however, narrative space has acquired a wider scope. It is analyzed from two perspectives: in terms of the techniques and devices employed to represent physical space, and in its metaphysical and essentialist dimension.

The physical space in real world is either the infinite expanse in which matter exists, or in finite terms the matter that occupies space. In fiction, space is usually represented by descriptions of setting. The setting, both spatial and temporal, is crucial in fiction. The characters exist and lead their lives in a physical environment, either described in detail, or whose existence becomes obvious by implication. The setting is thus essential for the action of characters, represented as the sequence of events, to unfold in. Indeed, the temporal setting is the time period over which action stretches. The classic example is the opening of Thomas Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native*: A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upwards, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his faggot and go home. The distant rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn,adden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread. (7)

This famous description of Egdon Heath serves as the setting for the story of Eustacia Vye and Clement Yeobright. Though the dramatic conflicts of their lives unfold in plot, the physical setting, the geographical space, in the novel exerts an influence of its own. It does not function just as a backdrop. Eustacia Vye's desires to escape the unexciting Egdon Heath, and dreams to be in the urban and sophisticated Paris. If this journey actually happens it would essentially be due to a spatial act she wants to perform. Hardy has very subtly balanced geographical space against the unravelling of plot. Clym's status as a native depends on his rootedness in a localized environment. He becomes a furze-cutter in Egdon Heath, which is a possibility arising out of the native location, or space, he repairs to. Throughout the novel the spatial setting remains an influencing presence. Since the events require space to unfold, physical space is intimately interwoven with the sequence of events in the novel. It may even be asserted that it becomes the cause of many events, for example, the death of Clym's mother.

In contrast to Hardy's opening in *The Return of the Native*, one may adduce the opening of the French novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet's novel *La Jalousie*. The novel opens with detailed descriptions of the banana plantation and the house of its owner who suspects that his wife is involved in an affair with his neighbour. The opening passage reads as follows:

Now the shadow of the column – the column which supports the south-west corner of the roof – divides the corresponding corner of the veranda into two equal parts. This veranda is a wide, covered gallery surrounding the house on three sides. Since its width is the same for the central portion as for the sides, the line of shadow cast by the column extends precisely to the corner of the house – but it stops there, for only the veranda flagstones are reached by the sun, which is still too high in the sky. The wooden walls of the house – that is, its front and west gable end – are still protected from the sun by the roof (common to the house proper and the terrace). So at this moment the shadow of the outer edge of the roof coincides exactly

with the right angle formed by the terrace and the two vertical surfaces of the corner of the house.

Now A... has come into the bedroom by the inside door opening onto the central hallway. She does not look at the wide-open window through which – from the door – she would see this corner of the terrace. Now she has turned back towards the door to close it behind her. She still has on the light-coloured, close-fitting dress with the high collar that she was wearing at lunch when Christiane reminded her again that loose-fitting clothes make the heat easier to bear. But A... merely smiled: she never suffered from the heat, she had known much worse climates than this – in Africa, for instance – and had always felt fine there. Besides, she doesn't feel the cold either. Wherever she is, she keeps quite comfortable. The black curls of her hair shift with a supple movement and brush her shoulders as she turns her head.

The heavy handrail of the balustrade has almost no paint left on top. The grey of the wood shows through, streaked with longitudinal cracks. On the other side of this rail, a good six feet below the level of the veranda, the garden begins. (80)

Before the above opening paragraphs, the novelist has provided a graphic outline of the outlay of the house and the surrounding garden, plantations and road. The contrast with Hardy is glaring. Hardy writes in the classicist mode and his novel embodies elements of Greek tragedy. As the title of the novel adumbrates, the novel is rooted in a *topos*, a place. The description of the Wessex heath in mythical terms suggests a cosmic role for the setting. It is not supposed to exist merely as a background. Hardy's setting is mythical, cosmic, expansive, indifferent, and unyielding. In contrast, Robbe-Grillet's setting is man-made, claustrophobic, and intrusive. The banana plantation is man's attempt to control and manipulate nature. The precision of the manner in which the plantation is laid out stands in sharp contrast with the humans' inability to control their own impulses, suggested by his wife's affair with the owner of the neighbouring plantation. Since *la jalouse* in French also

means ‘window,’ the spatial aspect of the novel becomes foregrounded with the overwhelming presence of enveloping space in the shape of a house. In the above opening, the events are reduced to minimal and routine tics and gestures. There is a deliberate ambiguity about the narrator. It is not clear whether the narrator is omniscient, or whether the husband of A narrates the story. But the perspective remains predominantly spatial. The temporal, chronological sequence of events is really a description of the daily routine and behaviour of A and her guest. In themselves the events do not have the intractable logic of the Aristotelian plot that ought to be coherent and causal. In fact, the events in the novel serve exactly the opposite purpose: they are unimportant, inconsequential, trivial, illogical, and a cover-up for real goings-on.

It is obvious that the presence of space in different forms—embodied or perspectival—acquires such a central role that it begins to function as an analogue and a substitute for the *mythos* (the Aristotelian plot).

In the novel, the incident of the squashing of the centipede on the wall is justly famous. An event, the squashing of the centipede, is transformed into a spatial image. The squashed centipede leaves a mark on the wall, which in turn begins to function as leitmotif. It appears in the novel again and again. One cannot deny that its iterability occurs in time, but one has also to accept that the spatial mark of the centipede in the hooked form of the interrogation mark is possible in the realm of space only. The leitmotif of the centipede is a classic example of the interpenetration of space and time in narrative. The mark acquires its unique meaning and function in the novel by virtue of repetition of its appearance- a temporal fact. The shape of the mark that the crushed centipede leaves on the wall resembles not only an abominable insect but also an interrogation mark and a flaccid phallus, thus invoking interwoven strands of neurosis, furtiveness, smothered lust, thwarted wish fulfillment, and innate fixations, which become meaningful in spatial terms only.

Consider another passage from the novel:

On all sides of the garden, as far as the borders of the plantation, stretches the green mass of the banana trees. On the right and the left, their proximity is too great, combined with the veranda's relative lack of elevation, to permit an observer stationed there to distinguish the arrangement of the trees – while further down the valley, the quincunx can be made out at first glance. In certain very recently replanted sectors – those where the reddish earth is just beginning to yield supremacy to foliage – it is easy enough to follow the regular perspective of the four intersecting lanes along which the young trunks are aligned. This exercise is not much more. This exercise is not much more difficult, despite their more advanced growth, for those sectors of the plantations on the opposite hillside: this, in fact, is the place which offers itself most readily to inspection, the place over which surveillance can be maintained with the least difficulty (although the path to reach it is a long one), the place which the eye falls on quite naturally of its own accord, when looking out of one or the other of the two open windows of the bedroom. (83)

In the traditional narrative, such detailed descriptions will be considered inconsequential, a verisimilar detail to create authentic atmosphere, or what Roland Barthes calls as ‘reality effect.’ It is supposed to be outside the cause-and-effect sequence of events, an anti-teleological device. The narrative is frozen into a stasis, and as a result it is an impediment to the dramatic conflict of the plot. This is a deliberate strategy. The anti-novel that *La Jalousie* claims to be is created exactly to subvert the temporal tyranny of the conventional plot- the *mythos*. Indeed, the technique is cinematic, which is no surprise since Robbe-Grillet was also an avant-garde film-maker. As images are paramount in cinema, a change in a state of affairs, which is the essential condition for the events to happen, occurs in images. In other words, the events are always spatialized. In the same manner, in *La Jalousie* the gaze of the narrator--first or third, intradiegetic or extradiegetic-- lingers on objects (the embodied space)

endowing the non-human setting- nature, landscape, manmade structures, and material objects- with emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic resonances. The purpose is exactly and wilfully to thwart the inveterate logic of a well-shaped plot, with climax placed somewhere at the end. As happens in a conventional plot, here meaning neither inheres in the sequence of events nor at certain well-defined points in the narrative. Perhaps, there is no meaning, no theme at all. The novel embodies a state of existence, a state of being, more ambivalent than ambiguous, in which the strands of subjectivity are intertwined with those of objectivity. The drama of human conflict unfolds both in time and in space, its tensions and strains, and the inexpressible, unformulatable, unconcretized aspects of it mirrored in the eeriness of space pressing from all sides.

(2)

Portraiture in fiction is analogous to the description of setting. Like ekphrasis, the description of human face and figure always invokes space. Even though the literary portrait is created by accretion of details, sometimes stylized, sometimes unique, and each detail adds up temporarily, the purpose is to create a spatial effect, similar to perceiving a face in an instant of time. The portraits are thus always embodiments of space. In other words, descriptions are always spaces inserted in the linear plot of the narrative. Consider the classic description of Eustacia Vye in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*:

That she was tall and straight in build, that she was lady-like in her movements, was all that could be learnt of her just now, her form being wrapped in a shawl folded in the old cornerwise fashion, and her head in a large kerchief, a protection not superfluous at this hour and place. (p. 63)

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity....

She was in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy; without ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain

darkness enough to form its shadow—it closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow.

She had pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries, and their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women.

The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl. Viewed sideways, the closing-line of her lips formed, with almost geometric precision, the curve so well known in the arts of design as the cima-recta, or ogee. ... So fine were the lines of her lips that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. ...

Across the upper part of her head she wore a thin fillet of black velvet, restraining the luxuriance of her shady hair, in a way which added much to this class of majesty by irregularly clouding her forehead. (79-82)

One must accept here that since language exists in time--sentences are linear, adding together in time--the descriptions of setting and portrait can be argued to exist in time. This cannot be denied. That problem however pertains to the medium employed. The point here is that in addition to sequence of events narrative consists of representations of space that are experienced and recuperated in the same terms as space is in the real physical world.

Whenever a narrative employs devices and techniques that invoke simultaneity and that require a spatial reading for interpretation and recuperation of meaning, narrative space is constructed. In modern times, narratologists have also studied and analyzed narratives in terms of the metaphysical conception of space. The classic study of narrative in this metaphysical dimension is considered to be Joseph Frank's "Spatial Form in Modern Literature."

Frank introduced the term “spatial form” to designate the kind of narrative in which the predominant characteristic is simultaneity. Such narratives tend to subvert the temporality and causality arising out of the chronological structure of plot. In Aristotelian terms, the events of plot follow each other in a causal relationship. Since plot is the soul of narrative, descriptive passages remain outside the realm proper of plot. In drama one can of course say that they belong to stage directions and parentheses. They are a matter of spectacle, while acts, thoughts and dialogues are more authentic means of characterization, rather than physical appearance and clothes. Though essentially the trajectory of plot remains linear, the possibility exists that a plot may depict two sequences of events occurring over the same time period. When this happens a relationship between the two sequences arising out of the contrast inherent in parallelism becomes inevitable. In such cases, simultaneity is invoked.

An instance of this is found in chapter XV (Book One) of George Eliot’s novel *Adam Bede*.

Consider the passage below from the chapter titled ‘The Two Bed-Chambers’:

At the thought of all this splendour, Hetty got up from her chair, and in doing so caught the little red-framed glass with the edge of her scarf, so that it fell with a bang on the floor; but she was too eagerly occupied with her vision to care about picking it up; and after a momentary start, began to pace with a pigeon-like stateliness backwards and forwards along her room, in her coloured stays and coloured skirt, and the old black lace scarf round her shoulders, and the great glass ear-rings in her ears.

To prevent such a surprise, she always bolted her door, and she had not forgotten to do so to-night. It was well: for there now came a light tap, and Hetty, with a leaping heart, rushed to blow out the candles and throw them into the drawer. She dared not stay to take out her ear-rings, but she threw off her scarf, and let it fall on the floor, before the light tap came again. We shall know how it was that the light tap came, if we leave Hetty for a short time and

return to Dinah, at the moment when she had delivered Totty to her mother's arms, and was come upstairs to her bedroom, adjoining Hetty's. (167-168)

And now the first thing she did on entering her room was to seat herself in this chair and look out on the peaceful fields beyond which the large moon was rising.

She had sat in this way perfectly still, with her hands crossed on her lap and the pale light resting on her calm face, for at least ten minutes when she was startled by a loud sound, apparently of something falling in Hetty's room. (174)

The narrator is of course omniscient, and thus able to describe events stretched over exactly the same segment of time. The purpose here is obvious--to set up a comparison between the two. One cannot deny the fact that the linear flow of time and narrative is impeded, and replaced with a spatialized segment of plot.

The techniques and devices that can be employed to cultivate simultaneity are innumerable. At the same time, the purpose can be structural and thematic, ideological and philosophical. In the case of Dickens' *Bleak House*, two strands of narrative run parallel, only to converge at the end. The technique is employed to introduce suspense as well as a sense of mystification in the narrative. But the novel is certainly illustrative of spatial narrative, whatever the reasons for using it.

Frank has cited Flaubert's agricultural fair scene in *Madame Bovary* as an example of 'simultaneously narrated actions.'

Rodolphe, meanwhile, with Madame Bovary, had gone up to the first floor of the town hall, to the "council-room," and, as it was empty, he declared that they could enjoy the sight there more comfortably. He fetched three stools from the round table under the bust of the monarch, and having carried them to one of the windows, they sat down by each other.

There was commotion on the platform, long whisperings, much parleying. At last the councillor got up. They knew now that his name was Lieuvain, and in the crowd the name

was passed from one to the other. After he had collated a few pages, and bent over them to see better, he began—"Gentlemen! May I be permitted first of all (before addressing you on the object of our meeting to-day, and this sentiment will, I am sure, be shared by you all), may I be permitted, I say, to pay a tribute to the higher administration, to the government to the monarch, gentle men, our sovereign, to that beloved king, to whom no branch of public or private prosperity is a matter of indifference, and who directs with a hand at once so firm and wise the chariot of the state amid the incessant perils of a stormy sea, knowing, moreover, how to make peace respected as well as war, industry, commerce, agriculture, and the fine arts?"

"I ought," said Rodolphe, "to get back a little further."

"Why?" said Emma.

But at this moment the voice of the councillor rose to an extraordinary pitch. He declaimed—"This is no longer the time, gentlemen, when civil discord ensanguined our public places, when the landlord, the business-man, the working-man himself, falling asleep at night, lying down to peaceful sleep, trembled lest he should be awakened suddenly by the noise of incendiary tocsins, when the most subversive doctrines audaciously sapped foundations."

"Well, someone down there might see me," Rodolphe resumed, "then I should have to invent excuses for a fortnight; and with my bad reputation—"

"Oh, you are slandering yourself," said Emma.

"No! It is dreadful, I assure you."

"But, gentlemen," continued the councillor, "if, banishing from my memory the remembrance of these sad pictures, I carry my eyes back to the actual situation of our dear country, what do I see there? Everywhere commerce and the arts are flourishing; everywhere new means of communication, like so many new arteries in the body of the state, establish within it new relations. Our great industrial centres have recovered all their activity; religion, more

consolidated, smiles in all hearts; our ports are full, confidence is born again, and France breathes once more!"

"Besides," added Rodolphe, "perhaps from the world's point of view they are right."

"How so?" she asked.

"What!" said he. "Do you not know that there are souls constantly tormented? They need by turns to dream and to act, the purest passions and the most turbulent joys, and thus they fling themselves into all sorts of fantasies, of follies."

Then she looked at him as one looks at a traveller who has voyaged over strange lands, and went on—

"We have not even this distraction, we poor women!"

"A sad distraction, for happiness isn't found in it."

"But is it ever found?" she asked.

"Yes; one day it comes," he answered.

"And this is what you have understood," said the councillor.

"You, farmers, agricultural labourers! you pacific pioneers of a work that belongs wholly to civilization! you, men of progress and morality, you have understood, I say, that political storms are even more redoubtable than atmospheric disturbances!"

"It comes one day," repeated Rodolphe, "one day suddenly, and when one is despairing of it.

And as he ended Rodolphe suited the action to the word. He passed his hand over his face, like a man seized with giddiness. Then he let it fall on Emma's. She took hers away.

"And who would be surprised at it, gentlemen? (Part II, Chapter VIII)

Frank writes that in the scene "the flow of time is thus stopped and one's attention is directed to the interplay between the levels inside the scene. The significance of the scene resides precisely in the interrelations between these levels and in the simultaneous perception of all three." (16–17).

As has been observed by critics and readers alike, the particular effect of the scene emerges exclusively from the simultaneous awareness of the multiple levels of scene happening isochronously, overlapping the same segments of time occupied by Bovary, her lover, the councillor, and the farmers.

(3)

In the nineteenth century, starting with Stendhal, Flaubert, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, the genre of novel had veered towards depiction of inner states of mind. In the previous century, the English novelist Laurence Sterne had already mocked the tyranny of the well-made, coherent plot by turning its conventions upside down in *Tristram Shandy*. But with the novel becoming respectable as an art form in the nineteenth century, its potential for representing human experience of the exterior world as well as the interior states of mind was exploited to great effects by various authors. The novelists realized that perception of reality--human and non-human-- depended not only on apprehension of time but also of space.

Towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the first two decades of the twentieth century, there was a marked transformation in human perception of universe as a consequence of developments in science, mathematics and philosophy. The absolutist concepts of Newtonian physics were replaced by a relativist world view. In 1910, the French philosopher Henri Bergson demonstrated in *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* that humans do not perceive time as discrete moments and instants; that time is always experienced as duree, a passage of time, that enters our consciousness and experience through memory.

At the turn of the twentieth century, many developments in psychology, behavioral sciences, and the philosophy of mind were leading to problematization of time as the determinant of human perception and experience.

The philosophical dimensions of time and space were also explored in contemporary arts. At the same time, influences of experimentation in the spatial arts of painting and sculpture began to influence the temporal arts of literature and music, too. The French Post-Impressionists, particularly, introduced new ways of perceiving the objective world around us and shaping space into an aesthetic form. It was their particular innovations and experimentations that had provoked Virginia Woolf to declare in her essay 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown': 'On or about December 1910 human character changed'. The precise date was chosen as a tribute to the painting exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, curated by Roger Fry, and held in London in December 1910.

Around this time, the debates about non-European myths---African, Mexican, Chinese, India--- brought home the fact that there were multiple ways of looking at the world. The realization dawned on the modernists that culture was essentially a means of coming to terms with an environment--unfriendly and meaningless. Culture provided a means of intuiting epistemological concepts and shaping them in myths to give meaning to an absurd universe. Eliot had famously declared that since it was becoming exceedingly difficult for the modern artists to express the complexities of modern life, it was imperative to resort to the mythic method. Many modernists believed that the traditional forms of artistic expression were outmoded and too restrictive. As a result, the artists resorted to breaking the traditional artistic mould, and also to borrowing from other cultures. One of the discoveries pertained to the cyclical nature of time as against its linear perception in Western culture. The fascination with the cyclical nature of time, mirrored in seasons and nature, and the concept of eternal return led to Yeats' *A Vision* and Eliot's casting of Christian time into cyclical eschatology in the *Four Quartets*.

In order to escape the restrictive tyranny of Western formulation of time, and to transform its epistemological and ontological categories, much of which was thought to have been derived

rationally as well as intuited through art forms, there was a conscious shift towards refurbishing older forms and creating newer ones by privileging the hitherto underexploited dimension of human experience and existence--- that is, space.

Realizing the significance of exploring the relationship between time and space from different vantage points, the modernists, as Frank points out, privileged those narrative techniques, devices and strategies that ‘deemphasized temporality and causality.’ Consequently, experimentations and innovations of the modernists were mostly carried out “through compositional devices such as fragmentation, montage of disparate elements, and juxtaposition of parallel plot lines.”

James Joyce’s enterprise in *Ulysses* was essentially spatial. As Frank asserts:

It was Joyce’s purpose in *Ulysses* to create an overall portrayal of a city in one day, juxtaposing people, locations, sights and voices, and thus to project a sense of simultaneous activity occurring in different places. And it is to this end that Joyce created the elaborate network of cross-references subtending his novel (17–18).

Three years after the publication of *Ulysses* in 1922, a famous example of the innovative use of narrative space is found in André Gide’s French novel *Les Faux-Monnayeurs (The Counterfeiters.)* While the narrator of the novel is engaged in writing a novel titled *The Counterfeiters*, as readers we are reading a novel called *The Counterfeiters*. The space occupied by the narrator-author is mirrored by the space of the novel he is creating. One can call this kind of space as ‘parallax space’, in which the aesthetic content and form emerge from an interaction with each other. The space that has been thus constructed is one of the most effective ways of exploring the relationship of reality with fiction and imagination, as well as that between aesthetic form and virtual reality. This kind of novel employs aesthetic and imaginative forms for epistemological purposes.

It cannot be denied that space remains an essential element of narrative. It depends on the author how to employ, control and manage it. The representation of physical space may have its verisimilar and authenticating uses, but that is its elementary and obvious function. As illustrated above, such space is always and inevitably interwoven with the temporal framework of narrative. It can be transformed into meaningful and supraliteral elements. It is, however, in its metaphysical dimensions that space poses a creative challenge. The spatial form is particularly amenable to relativistic philosophies and multiple perspectives, and to subverting the unrelenting rationale and tyrannies of temporality. Invoking the Russian Formalist dichotomy of *fabula*/ *syuzet* (story/discourse), it can finally be asserted that the aesthetic enterprise of transforming real and imagined *fabula* into narrative discourse is entirely spatial.

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